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THE BAPTIST Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

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No. 25

By William H. Perkins Jr.
Editor

An emergency closure of the main Interstate highway leading to the Mississippi Coliseum in Jackson on the evening of July 25 forced some late arrivals to Mississippi Baptist Youth Night, but it certainly didn't dampen the spirits of the more than 9,000 youth and chaperones who finally arrived for the annual event.

Authorities reported that a tractor-trailer rig apparently leaked slippery hydraulic fluid along several miles of Interstate 55 South, which runs alongside the Mississippi State Fairgrounds and serves as the major traffic artery for events in the Coliseum at the Fairgrounds.

Interstate 20, a major east-west feeder into the Fairgrounds area, was also affected. Both roadways were closed at about 5 p.m. after several accidents occurred due to the spill.

"We're sorry for those who had difficulty because of the Interstate closures. That was something we couldn't have foreseen," said Don Lum, event coordinator and chairman of the planning committee.

Lum said he also discovered too late that Coliseum officials had opened only the main gate into the Fairgrounds, which incoming Youth Night attendees had to share with participants registering for a horse show at the Fairgrounds.

"We're going to work with Coliseum officials to alleviate that problem before next year's event. Again, I want to sincerely apologize for the traffic problems," he said.

Christian vocalist Jake Gulledge's opening set, performed with his six-member band, took everyone's mind off the incoming traffic hassles, however, as he invited participants to join him in lifting their voices in praise to the Lord. Gulledge is



PRAISE HIM — Jake Gulledge of Gainesville, Fla., encourages the standing-room-only crowd at the 2003 Mississippi Baptist Youth Night July 25 at the Mississippi Coliseum in Jackson to join him in singing praise to the Lord. More than 9,000 people attended the annual event, which is sponsored by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Youth Ministry Team and funded by gifts to the Mississippi Cooperative Program. (BR photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

head of Jake Gulledge Ministries in Gainesville, Fla.

Stuart Hall of Dash Ministries in Alpharetta, Ga., served as the speaker for the evening, warning the students to take care in selecting the life path down which their feet will take them. "Your feet will take you in any direction you want to go," he said.

Lum estimated that more than 200 people came forward to make decisions for Christ during the invitation time.

Lum expressed appreciation for the people who served as volunteer counselors, including staffers from Camp Garaywa in Clinton and Central Hills Retreat near Kosciusko. "The volunteer counselors, like the adults who take time to bring these young people to Jackson every year, are critical to the success of Youth Night. We couldn't have this event without their dedication to it," he said.

pointed out.

The date and location for the 2004 edition of Mississippi Baptist Youth Night is July 23 at the Mississippi Coliseum in Jackson.

Mississippi Baptist Youth Night is the largest annual gathering of Mississippi Baptists in the state. It is sponsored each year by the Youth Ministry Team

of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, and funded by gifts to the Mississippi Cooperative Program.

For more information, contact Lum at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3280 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 280. E-mail: dlum@mbcb.org.



DECISIONS FOR CHRIST — Scores of young people and their chaperones gather around the stage during the invitation time at the 2003 Mississippi Baptist Youth Night July 25 at the Mississippi Coliseum in Jackson. Don Lum, event coordinator and chairman of the planning committee, reported that more than 200 decisions for Christ were recorded. (BP photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

Hall

WHAT'S IN THE RECORD

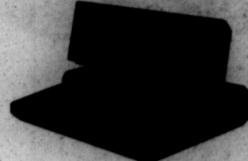
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EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



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August dawns tomorrow, and the budget planning season for 2004 is well underway in many (if not most) Mississippi Baptist churches. Money is tight everywhere, and that includes church budgets. Priorities will have to be established and tough decisions will have to be made.

What to maintain? What to cut? What to eliminate altogether? These are all questions that church leaders will face in coming weeks and months. Never an easy process — it seems needs are always greater than income, even in good years — balancing the church budget for the coming year is going to be a real challenge for many (if not most) Mississippi Baptist churches.

As budget deliberations proceed apace, there is one item in every church budget that should be protected from cuts at all costs: the Cooperative Program. It's just too important to all of us, and to a lost world in need of the Gospel.

For far too many Mississippi Baptists — and Southern Baptists in general — the Cooperative Program is the transparent, little-understood mechanism for funding virtually every activity undertaken on the state and national convention levels.

Begun in the 1920s, the Cooperative Program ensures that each Mississippi Baptist and Southern Baptist activity receives a share of the funding pie by pooling the gifts made by church members throughout the state and the national conventions.

Without the Cooperative Program, most of these activities would wither and die. Some would survive, but just barely, by returning to the pre-Cooperative Program days of "society" funding where supporters of every needy cause would individually approach every church for a contribution to their cause.

If your church's pastor, music minister, and other staffers received quality educations at Southern Baptist seminaries, you can thank the Cooperative Program for helping maintain the campus, compensate faculty, and keep expenses as low as possible in many other ways.

If you pray daily for the many thousands of full-time missionaries commissioned by the International Mission Board and the North American Mission Board, you can thank the Cooperative Program for helping in the administration of those agencies, which frees up gifts to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American Missions to be spent on mission fields.

Without the Cooperative Program, there would likely be no salvation testimonies from Camp Garaywa, Mississippi Baptists' Girls in Action campgroup in Clinton; Central Hills Retreat, Mississippi Baptists' Royal Ambassador campground outside Kosciusko; or Gulfshore Assembly, Mississippi Baptists' Gulf Coast campground in Pass Christian. Bible Drills wouldn't happen. All are supported by the Cooperative Program.

There would be no Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Unit to respond in the name of Jesus whenever crisis grips a community. There would be no church planting effort in the burgeoning Hispanic community in the state.

Local ministries are vitally important and should be supported, but there's also a whole big world out there waiting to hear about Jesus Christ. Apparently following the poor example of churches pastored by some of our most notable national convention "leaders," however, a disturbing number of Mississippi Baptist churches are choosing to give a trivial percentage to the Cooperative Program and keep the rest for themselves.

"**MY WIFE AND I ARE NOT TITHERS, PASTOR — WE'RE CRISIS GIVERS. SHOW US A NEED, GET US CHARGED UP, AND STAND BACK! YOU CAN'T BUILD THE CHURCH WITH US, BUT WE DON'T MIND!**"



That's a shame, because funding 54 church members on a two-week mission trip to Mexico is not the same as funding 5,400 International Mission Board missionaries around the world. Funding ten youth from the church to help the poor for a week in another state is not the same as funding 10,000 World Changers all across the country — and now internationally.

The Cooperative Program is simply too important to minimize. Too much is at stake, and too little time is left before our Savior returns. It's not broke. It doesn't need fixing. It does need undying, sacrificial support.

Just some food for thought during this church budget season.

GUEST OPINION:



Restoring my soul At Camp Garaywa

By June Nolen, member
Broadmoor Church, Madison

models they provide to so many young campers!

As I recalled my week at Camp Garaywa, I realized that it's not just the 2,000 GAs who benefit from their time at the camp, but all those involved including the management staff. Personally, it was a time during which I grew spiritually, experienced God's presence in a beautiful setting, and relished the words of Psalm 23: *He leads me beside the still waters and restores my soul.*

I can only imagine the impact the week had on the fourth, fifth, and sixth grade girls, and on their families and communities as they returned home to share their experiences. Some of the girls will share personal salvation testimonies that will have an impact on all their days.

Thank you, Mississippi Baptists, for providing this wonderful opportunity for the future Christian women leaders of our state and world. Thank you, Mississippi WMU, for inviting me to be a part of it.

ties such as swimming, crafts, art, music, clowning, and more. The night sessions are filled with more music and worship but with a different atmosphere. Group activities follow with much laughter and giggles throughout the fun and games. A devotion time is observed to bring the day to a close, just before lights out.

Serving at Camp Garaywa is exhausting but so rewarding. In fact, I needed a week to myself to enjoy God's goodness before returning to Ukraine!

The thing that impressed me greatly about the week was getting to know the 40 exceptional young women who served as

camp staff. All of them had college or seminary experience, and many already know that God is leading them into Christian ministries. Some of the staffers had specific leadership roles, such as life guard or unit leader along with being a cabin leader. It was great to see their talents used in praise of God.

Rachel Michel Dove served this summer as camp director after serving for several years in other staff capacities. Seeing God raise up future leaders to further His Kingdom is so exciting. What a spiritual blessing it was to listen to their personal testimonies! What wonderful role

James ossuary dealer arrested for forgery

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — The Israeli antiquities dealer whose discovery of the so-called James ossuary gained worldwide attention has been arrested in Jerusalem allegedly for forging the item.

Oded Golan was arrested July 21 and appeared the next day in court, where police revealed forging equipment — stencils, stones and yet-to-be-completed forgeries — they said were found in his home, according to the Associated Press (AP).

Israel's Antiquities Authority announced June 18 that the ossuary markings were faked, but Golan continues to insist that the inscription is authentic. "I am certain the ossuary is real," Golan said. "I am certain that the committee is wrong regarding its conclusions."

Also determined by the authority to be a forgery: the "Yoash inscription," a shoebox-sized tablet containing 15 lines of ancient Hebrew with instructions for maintaining the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem. The inscriptions, possibly done in two separate stages, are not authentic, the

authority said in a statement as reported by AP.

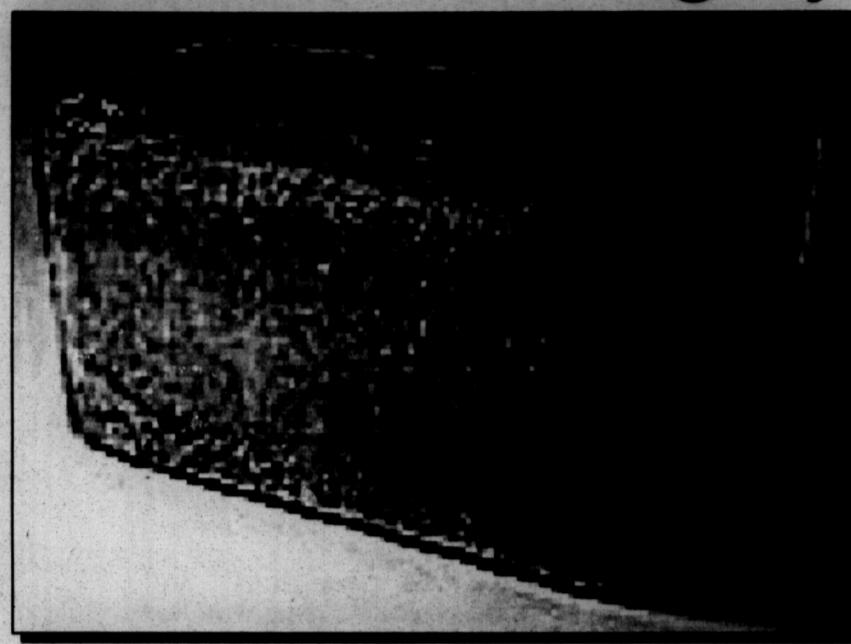
Golan is suspected of forging both items, which shook the archeological world at the time of their discovery and had scholars debating their authenticity.

The James ossuary contains an inscription on the side reading, "James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus" — leading scholars to speculate it once contained the remains of the Apostle James. It was valued at one to two million dollars.

Golan reportedly bought the James ossuary in the mid-1970s from an antiquities dealer in Jerusalem's Old City for about \$200, although the AP said he could not remember the dealer's name.

Steven Ortiz, assistant professor of archaeology at New Orleans Seminary, told Baptist Press that forgery is an "unfortunate problem within the archaeological community" and gives honest archeological scholarship a bad name.

While holding off judgment on the authenticity of the two items, Ortiz said it is "very easy" for a person to



James ossuary

forge an item — especially if the person is knowledgeable of the history of the biblical languages.

"There are a lot of scholars, epigraphers (specialists who decipher ancient inscriptions), that get duped," Ortiz said. Forgery is "more common" when the items have inscriptions — like the two items in question — because scripted items "bring the big money," he said.

Scholars carefully study the inscription to try and determine if the style of the letters and the words could have been written during an ancient era, Ortiz said. Sometimes, by looking at the inscription under a microscope, it can be easy to spot a forgery, he said.

"You can tell if the inscription was made by 'modern tools or ancient tools,' he said, but if the item is 'weathered,' determining a forgery becomes more difficult, Ortiz said. Weathering is a natural process by which the stone's characteristics — such as its color — change over time.

"You can tell how long your newspaper has been sitting out in the front yard by how yellow it is," Ortiz said. "[Similarly,] that happens to the stone."

Weathering, though, also can be forged, he said.

Even before Golan's arrest,

the Israel Antiquities Authority said in June that both items were fakes. The scholars reached their conclusion about the James ossuary by studying the weathering process. They determined that the patina, a thin film that covers the stone and is acquired with age, had been broken, AP reported.

However, in the July/August issue of Biblical Archaeology Review — where the James ossuary was first showcased — scholar Edward J. Keall says that new tests bolster the case for its authenticity. Keall serves as a senior curator at the Toronto Royal Ontario Museum, where the ossuary was displayed last year.

"The studies we conducted have convinced us that the ossuary and its inscription are genuinely ancient and not a modern forgery," he writes.

Keall argues that the weathering has "occurred at a uniform rate" and that the inscription "has weathered naturally, at the same rate as the adjacent parts of the ossuary."

Looking back

10 years ago

David Millican, age 58, pastor of South McComb Church, passes the 30-year mark in his pastorate at the church. The Hamilton, Ala., native came to South McComb Church in 1963 from First Church, Stonewall.

20 years ago

Three new television stations, to be built in Greenville, N.C., Paragould, Ark., and Tyler, Tex., are the first stations to become part of American Christian Television Stations (ACTS), the new Southern Baptist national TV network.

50 years ago

Poplar Springs Church, Simpson County, has an "old fashioned" revival. According to the report in The Baptist Record, kerosene lamps were used and the people dressed as they did "in the old days." The Record noted that the auditorium had been recently painted.

THE SECOND FRONT PAGE



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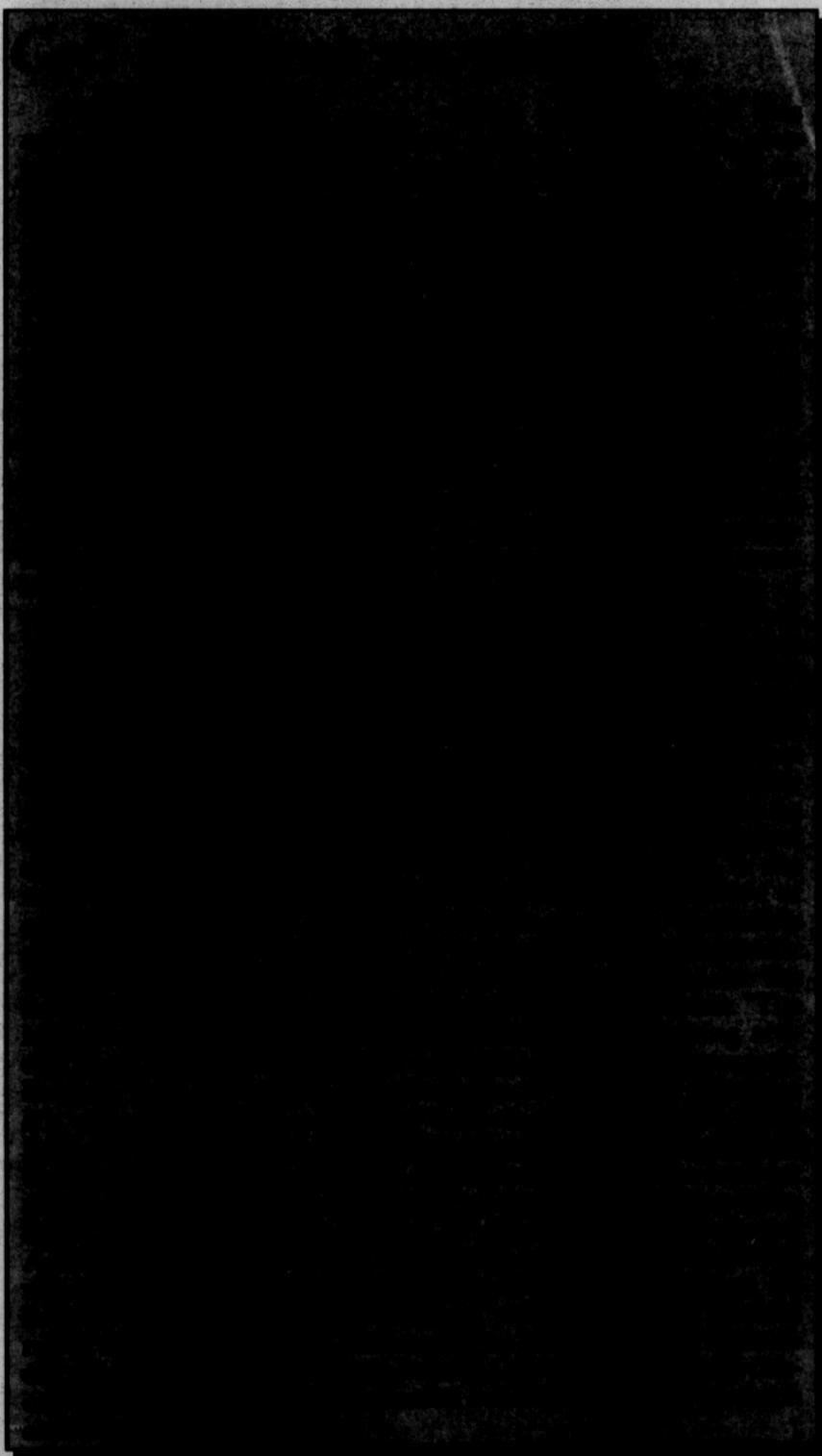
JULY 31, 2003

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No. 25



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS



Strange creatures inhabit behavioral study

Lotz urges U.S. to quell Liberia unrest

WASHINGTON (BP) — Denton Lotz, general secretary of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA), sent a letter to President Bush July 22 on behalf of Baptists in Liberia urgently requesting the president to send military forces to protect the lives of innocent people.

"There has been a long historical relationship between the USA and Liberia. Hundreds are dying, thousands are wounded, and thousands of others are left homeless as refugees without food, without support, without encouragement," Lotz wrote.

Liberia considers its connection to the United States strong because the West African nation was founded by freed slaves from America in 1847. Its capital, Monrovia, is named after President James Monroe and the country's government structure shares many similarities with the United States.

Two rebel forces in Liberia have grown more aggressive in the past six weeks as they strive to topple President Charles Taylor's government. Taylor, a former rebel leader accused of crimes against humanity in connection with strife in Sierra Leone, has agreed to step down if an international peacekeeping force will arrive to assume power.

"Failure to act immediately will incur further wrath of the African people, and particularly those of Liberia, against the inability of the U.S. government to work for peace and stability in Africa," Lotz concluded in his letter to the president. "Our Liberian brothers and sisters plead for help now. Please do not delay!"

Liberia and China were the first two mission fields opened by Southern Baptists, both in 1846, a year after the convention organized its foreign mission board.

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Larry Smith is an otter who loves to talk. He has some golden retriever in his blood, and one of his main concerns is making others happy. Janet, his wife, is a golden retriever with beaver tendencies. She's very detail-oriented and makes things happen.

Otter mixed with golden retriever? Golden retriever mixed with beaver? What kind of hybrid mixes are these?

The mixes are the results of Marriage Insights, a behavioral assessment service of LifeWay Christian Resources designed to help couples understand their God-given strengths and blend their differences.

"It really helped us to better understand each other," said Smith, the family life pastor at Palmcroft Church in Phoenix. "The main benefit is in the area of communication, getting people to talk to each other."

Marriage Insights is just one of five assessments offered by LifeWay. The Insights family also includes Ministry Insights, Position Insights, Family Insights and Workplace Insights.

Ministry Insights, the most widely used assessment, helps churches build close-knit ministry teams. "The reports focus on positive behavioral styles, communication preferences and strengths, not weaknesses," said Gary McClure, marketing manager of the technology division at LifeWay. "It emphasizes how to leverage the good qualities God has instilled in each of us."

By Frank Lay
Correspondent

The churches of New Choctaw Association have recognized the need for the training of church leaders. As a result, the association has begun a seminary extension center that currently meets each Saturday morning at Pearl River Church in Choctaw.

Seven students are enrolled in the first class to be offered by the center. The students include one pastor, three licensed ministers, one deacon, and two lay people. The purpose of the center is to equip church leaders in order that they might help strengthen the Native American Churches that comprise the New Choctaw Association.

The students themselves felt the need to become better grounded in basic doctrine. Consequently, they requested that a class in Systematic Theology be the first course to

be offered. With the assistance of the Margaret Lackey State Mission Offering and the Church Planting Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention, the center will be able to offer the class.

The survey is easy to use and accurate. Participants answer 24 questions and receive, usually in less than 20 minutes, a personalized report full of practical tips and easy-to-understand graphs.

Smith said one of his favorite things about the service is the in-depth reports. "They pull out a 25-page report out of these questions," Smith said. "It's a fantastic tool to better understand yourself and those with whom you interact."

Each report is based on years of research and incorporates thousands of algorithms to generate results. "The personal reports are so accurate that participants often inquire 'if we have been reading their mail,'" McClure said.

Each person is a combination of all four styles, but typically one animal personality is primary:

- Lions tend to be strong, assertive, take charge people. They are decisive people who can be impatient when roadblocks pop up.

- Otters are often fun-loving and verbal people. They're

people who like starting tasks and seeing them completed. They're very systematic, and they are usually very organized.

The in-depth reports also include lists identifying strengths, do's and don'ts for communicating, keys to motivating and leading, areas for improvement and more.

Smith used Insights for the first time three years ago during a staff retreat. Since then, he has used Marriage Insights numerous times in premarital counseling.

"I want to be sure that [a couple] know each other as much as they can before they get married," Smith said. "The expectations in marriage are far greater than anyone can reach. This is a wonderful test to see how compatible two people really are."

Family Insights comes in two versions: for parents and for teenagers. The results of the two

versions are combined to help build understanding and communication within the family.

Aside from being easy to use and accurate, the service also is affordable. Insights assessments cost \$19.95.

For more information on Insights, visit www.lifeway.com/insights.



BEHAVIORAL TYPES — Golden retrievers, beavers, lions, and otters are used in the Insights assessments available from LifeWay Christian Resources as descriptors for the strengths and differences among couples, families, and churches. (BP art)

usually creative people who focus on the big picture rather than the details.

- Golden retrievers are understanding and compassionate people. They tend to be good, loyal team players and want everyone to feel close and connected.

- Beavers are detail-oriented

Choctaw seminary extension center launched

be offered. With the assistance of the Margaret Lackey State Mission Offering and the Church Planting Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

Vowell, a 1999 M.Div. graduate of New Orleans Seminary,

Students are required to do additional reading in theology, take tests, and write a four-page paper comparing different theological viewpoints.

Some of the students have expressed a desire to extend their studies beyond the extension center level. Plans are being made to begin an evening class to reach interested students who are unable to attend the Saturday class.

The Church Planting Department utilizes state mission offering funds to provide the institute with instructors, textbooks, and refreshments. With the help of Mississippi Baptists, the students only pay

the \$35 registration fee.

Students enrolled in the extension program are Henderson Williams, pastor of Pearl River Church, Lucille Billie, Paul



TEACHER AND STUDENTS — Chris Vowell (center) of Philadelphia teaches at the seminary extension center begun by the churches of New Choctaw Association and the Church Planting Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, with assistance from the Margaret Lackey State Mission Offering. Current students at the center include (from left): Lucille Billie, Paul Billie, John E. Isaac, Wilburn Williamson, and Henderson Williams. (BR photo by Frank Lay)

Convention Board, Chris Vowell of Philadelphia was enlisted to teach the diploma level course

teaches theology with enthusiasm and conviction. Each class will continue for nine weeks.

Billie, John E. Isaac, Wilburn Williamson, Robert Tubby, and Kevil Willis.

NOBTS music classes to begin August 18

August 18 begins the first of eight courses at nine locations in Mississippi sponsored by New Orleans Seminary. The eight courses are:

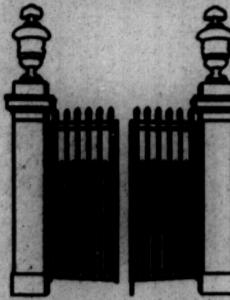
- Song Leading.
- Worship Planning.
- Reading Music: Rhythm/Pitch.
- Reading Music: Harmony/Melody.
- Hymnology.
- Music Administration/Staff Relations.
- Survey of Music Resources.
- Class Voice.

These courses are designed to provide basic training for bivocational music directors and other music leaders in churches.

The eight courses meet two hours per week. Each course is eight weeks in length. The cycle of courses is scheduled over a two-year period. Each course is independent and has no prerequisite.

Each student who completes the eight courses earns a Church Music Certificate from New Orleans Seminary plus a credit of eight hours toward an

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary



on campus degree program. There is a one-time registration fee of \$25. The cost of each course is \$85. Scholarships are available for first-time students. The grant is limited to one person per church.

The first course, "Song Leading," will meet once a week for two hours for eight consecutive weeks at the following locations and time:

• Broadmoor Church, Madison — beginning August

18 (7-9 p.m.); J. McCaleb, Teacher.

• Handsboro Church, Gulfport — beginning August 18 (6:30 - 8:30 p.m.); Louis White, Teacher.

• First Church, Booneville — beginning August 18 (7-9 p.m.); LuAnne Ford, Teacher.

• Northcrest Church, Meridian — beginning August 18 (6:30 - 8:30 p.m.); Buddy McElroy, Teacher.

• Hernando Church, Hernando — beginning August 18 (7-9 p.m.); Barry Tweedy, Teacher.

• Tri-County Associational Building, Columbia — beginning August 19 (6:30-8:30 p.m.); Kenny Adams, Teacher.

• Meadville Church, Meadville — beginning August 19 (6:30-8:30 p.m.); Chuck McMinn, Teacher.

• Clarksdale Church, Clarksdale — beginning August 18 (7-9 p.m.); Hugh Plunkett, Teacher.

These classes could be offered at other locations in the state, where eight to ten students are interested in enrolling.

For more information, contact coordinator Jimmy McCaleb at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (292) 3273 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 273. E-mail: jmccaleb@mbcb.org.

REACH THE CHILDREN

Jesus has given us a command to go into all the world and make disciples for Him. Surely and significantly, the world of which He speaks includes reaching our own children but, statistically, some people point out that we may not even be fulfilling His commands in our homes. In some ways, the figures show that we are not even reaching our own children for Jesus.

I am certainly aware of the old adage that says, "figures don't lie, but liars figure." In that light, figures can be skewed, distorted, and may not show the whole picture. It is a concern that burdens my heart that oftentimes we do not live with a prayerful, burning passion to reach our children and grandchildren for Christ. Often, young parents are so busy with all of the responsibilities of work, home, children, and their own personal needs, that they don't see the kids as they so quickly move along, shifting gears from toddlers to kindergarten, from grade school to middle school, from high school to college, and before they know it they are on their way.

While we honestly and earnestly intend to give attention to the most important feature in our children's lives — them coming to know Jesus — it just kind of gets lost in the fog of growing up so quickly.

Let me share with you some reasons why it is so important that we reach the children:

• It is important because the eternal destiny of a child is settled when he or she is most reachable. A child's



Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

heart is open, pliable, and responsive. From a purely statistical measurement, children are far easier to reach than adults. That is understandable because from childhood to adulthood two factors are at work in the heart:

There is a gradual hardening of the heart that takes place as we grow older and become more cynical, maybe even embittered, by the circumstances of life and our own warped decision making.

The other thing that is at work is complacency. It becomes an overwhelming force. If a person goes through childhood into the teen years, and on into adulthood hearing God's voice and putting off the decision to accept Christ over and over again, they tend to become totally complacent. They become insensitive to making that decision. They think that they will always have time because they have always had opportunities.

That complacency could be their ruination, for they will not always have time and they certainly will not always have the appropriate and opportune times. In their complacency they just squander away one by one the opportunities and become even more complacent.

So reaching the children is vitally important while their eternal destiny can be settled at a reachable moment.

• Another reason it is important to reach the children is because the maximum time to be available for the service of our Lord is theirs. Surely someone could be saved, even in the last steps of life, but oh what a waste. All those years of potential — gone! All those times when they could have meant so much to so many — gone!

Dwight L. Moody was returning from preaching at an evangelistic rally and was asked what the results were. Moody responded, "Had 2-1/2 conversions." The person responded, "Two and a half? You mean two adults and one child were saved?" "No," said Moody, "two children and one adult." The great preacher recognized that the adult had half a life left, while the two children had their entire lifetime to give to the Lord.

• One other reason why it is so important to reach the children is because all of life's important decisions can then be made with Jesus on the throne of their hearts. In that great verse Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and

the life..." He is the way that leads to Heaven, but in most of our lives, we have come to decision-making moments where Satan has grafted into our roadway detours that could take us far away from the Lord. Thank God, He has given us a Redeemer, a Savior, who is the truth and can keep us on track, in the road, along the way.

All of life's important decisions can better be made with Jesus guiding a person. Decisions like where to go to school; what to study; what to do with your life; who you should marry; what the principles for living should be; and on and on. These kinds of decisions are going to have to be answered, and they can best be answered by having Jesus at your side!

Parents, your children may be small and you may think they will never leave your side, but I assure you that they will grow, and they will be away from you sooner than you could ever imagine! Please realize that they will not have to go away to college or the military, to be away from your oversight and control.

In the early stages of their educational process they will be away from you, outside of your view, and can and will act without your input. They will, all along the way, be best served by personally knowing Jesus and being blessed by His guidance.

Today, make it a personal matter between you and the Lord, that your heart will be saturated with concern for your children and that your burning desire will be for them to know the Lord!

Missionaries' soldier son killed in Iraq

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP) — Capt. Joshua T. Byers, son of North American missionaries Lloyd and Mary Byers, was killed in action in Iraq the morning of July 23.

The Byerses have been missionaries since January in Guam, a U.S. territory, where Lloyd Byers is director of missions for the Guam Baptist Association. He previously served as church planter/pastor of Foothills Community Church in Mt. Airy, Ga.

Joshua Byers, a member of the Army's Third Armored Cavalry Regiment, was killed when a bomb exploded near his vehicle as it was traveling in a 50-vehicle convoy between two Iraqi towns, according to his mother. Seven others were wounded in the bombing, which was triggered remotely by two Iraqis hiding in bushes nearby, she said.

Byers is survived by his wife Kim, who lives in Fountain, Colo., near Fort Carson. He is a 1996 graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point.

Bibliocipher

By Charles Marx
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OQVTXE CAJY: YAKBH

Clue: X = N

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Ezekiel 36:27

JUST FOR THE RECORD



Cedar View Church, Olive Branch, will hold a Community Sing featuring Garry Sheppard on August 16 at 6 p.m.

Sheppard

The GAs of Oak Grove Church, Shubuta, will host a tea party for Nina Rigdon on August 9 from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. A love offering will be taken following the luncheon with all proceeds helping send Rigdon back to the Ukraine.

The GAs of West Heights Church, Pontotoc, held a recognition service, Seeking the Possible Mission in His Kingdom, on June 1. Pictured are the GAs. They also celebrated the GAs 90th birthday in June. Pictured (from left) are Myrl Tutor and Mabel Crawford.

First Church, Holly Springs, Time Out for Women on August 8-9. The theme is Run for the Prize. The conference begins at 6 p.m. Friday and concludes at noon on Saturday. Registration is \$20. Suzanne Gigsby and Cheri Holcomb are the key speakers. For more information, call (662) 252-2627.



Tutor and Crawford

Leflore Church, Holcomb, will present an evening of praise and worship featuring Terry Terrell on August 2 at 6 p.m. A love offering will be taken. For more information, call (662) 227-1259.

Season of Summer Renewal and Living a Life of

Significance was held at Utica Church, Utica, recently with Rob Futral, Country Woods Church, Byram, leading the services. Music was under the direction of Jim Farrish, also of Country Woods. Pictured (from left) are Ben James, pastor, and Futral.



Ben James and Rob Futral

Pleasant Hill Church, Calhoun, held VBS in June. The children raised \$134.17 and after being matched by church members, they gave a total of \$2151.18 to be donated to the Baptist Children's Village.



Pleasant Hill Church VBS Participants, Calhoun City



GAs of West Heights, Pontotoc

Finding the time to make a difference

Susan and her husband, Max Draughn, are like many young couples today - busy. "My husband and I wanted to make an endowment gift to our church's preschool ministry, but we also knew we didn't have time to deal with managing the investment on a day to day basis. That's where the Baptist Foundation came in," said Susan. "With three young boys, we don't have lots of free time. Having the professional planned giving services from the Baptist Foundation was just what we needed."

Susan and Max wanted to make a difference in the lives of the children at Broadmoor Baptist Church in Madison. "As an accountant, I was comfortable with the people at the Baptist Foundation. I knew what their investment strategies were and that they would stay true to them," said Susan.

The Draughns were so pleased with the work and ministry of the Baptist Foundation, that they also established a Cemetery Trust for Boyles Chapel Methodist Church in memory of Max's mother. "We're happy with the performance of our investments and we have a good relationship with the good people at the Foundation."



Jesus Christ

Requests the Honor
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in Heaven!

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your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (*I have sinned.*)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (*I repent.*)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (*I believe in Jesus.*)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with him. (*I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.*)

But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name (John 1:12).

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.



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NAMES IN THE NEWS

Mt. Olive Church, Smithdale, held a GA recognition service in May. Pictured (from left) are Raleigh Wroten, WV 1-6, Lindsey DeLatte, WV 1-3, Mary Barnard, WV 1-3, and Grace Dillon, WV 1-2.



GAs of Mt. Olive, Smithdale

available for church supply and revivals and can be contacted at (601) 696-9520.

Laurel Hill Church, Philadelphia, will celebrate their pastor Hugh A. Martin's, 50th anniversary of preaching on August 16 at 2 p.m. All are welcome.

McBee Church, Columbus, ordained Bryan Windle as deacon on May 18. Pictured (from left) are his wife Karen, Windle, Jimmy Ray, pastor, and his mother Dorothy Tarlton.



Karen & Bryan Windle, Jimmy Ray, pastor, and Dorothy Tarlton

West Salem Church, Richton, held a deacon ordination on June 15. Pictured (from left) are Rick Hamm, Stacie and Andy Henderson, Chris Ann and Mitchell Tucker, Kay and Keith Elmore, Laine and Ronnie Kitchens, and Mark King, interim pastor.



After more than 21 years as pastor of Grace Church, Philadelphia, Dennis Duvall has resigned to assume the position of chaplain at Rush Foundation Hospital in Meridian. He is available for pulpit supply and can be reached evenings at (601) 656-8367.

The following GAs of **Gunter Road Church, Florence**, have completed their WV 4 books. Pictured (from left) are Candace Anderson, Victoria Burnham, Katelyn Dukes, Kayla Anderson, Cherlyn Wilhelm, Alana Turner, Carmen Hubbard, and Nita Turner, leader.



YOUTH OF EAST UNION CHURCH, MAGNOLIA

The youth group of **East Union Church, Magnolia**, recently returned from their trip to Eureka Springs, Ark. They toured The Holy Land, visited The Christ of the Ozarks, and watched The Great Passion Play.

Friendship East Church, Charleston, held a building dedication on April 27. Terry Tribble held the morning service, and Clarence Cooper and Truman Scarborough held the dedication service. Johnny Lindley is the building director and J. G. Thomas is pastor.



GAs of Gunter Road Church, Florence

Bessie Sue Wilcher and Hugh Martin, pastor



First Church, Boyle, ordained Perry Keyes into the ministry on

Perry Keys and Joe Anderson, pastor

July 20. Keyes and his family will be moving to New Orleans and attending New Orleans Seminary. Pictured (from left) are Keyes and Joe Anderson, pastor.

Laurel Hill Church, Philadelphia, recently honored Bessie Sue Wilcher for her 45 years of service as pianist. Pictured (from left) are Wilcher and Hugh A. Martin, pastor, presenting her with a plaque and check.



West Salem Deacon Ordination, Richton

DISTORTION OF TRUTH

Editor:

Having served in a Mississippi church in years past, I have continued my subscription to The Baptist Record out of interest for news of churches and people in the state.

I have especially enjoyed your time of service and your excellent Editor's Notebook pieces. Your insightful writing of May 29 was the best analysis of the condition within our International Mission Board that I have seen. I want to loudly give several "Amens!" to this questioning of motives and actions on the part of Jerry Rankin and the trustees of the board.

It has struck me as a distortion of the truth when the missionaries have been told they must sign the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message since the "churches that support them" expect them to do so, and/or "since this is what the denomination believes." How many Southern Baptists were at the convention at the time this was adopted? How many of our churches and church members have voted that missionaries must follow these guidelines?

Thank you again for the excellent work and ministry you are performing in your position as editor. May your tribe increase.

Van H. Evans
El Dorado, Arkansas

OBEDIENCE BETTER

Editor:

I would like to say thanks to Elizabeth Taylor for her response on the problem concerning our missionaries (Pray for our Missionaries, letter to the editor in June 12 issue). The Lord has blessed Southern Baptists. Several times we have stumbled in this onward march, but have managed with God's leadership to humble ourselves and realize that flesh cannot succeed.

Isn't our need for sackcloth and ashes? Obedience is still bet-

ter than sacrifice. My thoughts are obedience to the printed Word. Man (flesh) is just for a day, but God's Word will last forever. Our loving God is in control; let His Spirit lead.

Lou Carroll
Biloxi

DOLLAR FOR MISSIONS

Editor:

You may be aware that the International Mission Board (IMB), despite a record Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, had to make serious cuts this year. Facing a \$10 million shortfall, the Board felt it necessary to make these cuts, as well as eliminate 61 stateside staff positions and Commission magazine.

Your heart may have been as burdened as mine was upon reading this news. What can we do? Baptist Press recently featured an article on a group of missionary kids at the Missionary Learning Center in Richmond who suggested that one dollar from each of the 16 million Southern Baptists would more than make up the shortfall.

Is there any reason why every Southern Baptist church could not receive a special offering which would total at least one dollar for every church member, and forward it to IMB for the purpose of sending these missionaries? We have prayed for years for our missionary force to grow, and record numbers are responding to the needs of the lost world. God forbid that this flood of mission workers would be halted because of lack of funds!

This is not a good time to take a special offering. We just finished kicking off a building program and we are in the summer giving slump that most churches experience, but we must act. It should be absolutely unacceptable to us that 100-plus new missionaries are not sent to the mission field due to the lack of one dollar per SBC church member! Is our commitment so low, and our priorities so skewed, that we

cannot raise a dollar per member to meet this need?

Please join me by leading your church to send at least a dollar per member to IMB as soon as possible, and encourage other pastors and churches to join you.

Shawn Thomas, pastor
First Church, Moses Bluff
Lake Charles, Louisiana

FOR ADVENTUROUS

Editor:

Are you looking for an exciting challenge? Do you love to hunt and fish? Do you love adventure? Do you like living in a place where the seasons really change? Then we may have just what you're looking for! Muldoon Road Church in Anchorage, Alaska, is searching for a full-time minister of music. Our church has averaged 400-plus in Sunday School and 600-plus in Sunday morning worship, but has gone through some difficult times the past several years. With a new pastor on board since February, the perfect location, and \$13,000,000 worth of property, we are positioned for substantial growth.

If you have a degree in music, some practical experience in music leadership, and a love for church ministry, we would love to talk with you. We will provide a competitive salary package. If interested, please contact me at (907) 333-9558 or (907) 223-5930. E-mail: pastor.mrbca@gci.net.

Jim Thrash, pastor
Muldoon Rd. Church
Anchorage, Alaska

JUST FOR SHOW

Editor:

Are there any other nominations? In case there are, we want you to know that they are just for show. Nobody is going to pay attention to other nominations. The decision to nominate Bobby Welch as president of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) was made a year prior to the convention in 2004.

It's my understanding that these decisions are made early in the year on a cruise ship. In an interview with the Florida Baptist Witness, John Sullivan, executive director of the Florida Baptist Convention, confirmed that Welch's name will be placed in nomination for the position of president of the SBC in 2004.

Let me say that I am certainly not opposed to Welch. I believe him to be a godly man. The bone I am picking is with the so-called Big Darlin Boys who have assumed the role of the "Trinity." They do not think that we peons have enough sense to make the right choice for president and to make the right decisions.

I want to remind this bunch that the Conservative Resurgence would never have happened if the little preachers hadn't been there in 1979. If Paul the Apostle attended a Southern Baptist Convention, I am sure he would write another epistle and it would not be very nice.

Whether the Big Darlin Boys know it or not, they are accomplishing some things that really hurt:

- There is no faith to believe God can make the right choice and decision.
- There is no trust in the rest of us. All they want out of us is money!

• What they are accomplishing is an insult to the body of Christ.

- They are telling God, "We are in charge."

Vaughn Denton, pastor
Magnolia Church
Olive Branch



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Unsigned letters will not be printed. No multi-copy or form letters will be used.

Each correspondent must include an address and telephone number for verification. In special instances, name may be withheld at writer's request and editor's discretion.

Please include the name of cooperating Mississippi Baptist church where correspondent is a member. (Mississippi Baptists' letters will receive priority when space is limited.)

Letters must be limited to 250 words. All correspondence is subject to editing.

Correspondents should refrain from personal attacks. The opinions expressed in letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

No more than one letter from any individual will be printed during a three-month period.

When in the judgement of the editor a given issue has received sufficient attention, correspondence dealing with it will no longer be published and a notice will be printed to that effect.

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LEESVILLE - FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH: Full-time youth and recreation minister. Send resumes with photo to: Youth Pastor

Search Committee, First Baptist Church of Leesville, P.O. Box 1568, 1400 Nolan Trace, Leesville, LA 71446; or email fbcleesville@wnonline.net.

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YOUTH PASTOR NEEDED, KINGWOOD, First Baptist Church, Kingwood, Texas is looking for a full-time youth pastor for stu-

dents in grades 7th-12th, and college. Interested applicants should send resume to Kingwood First Baptist Church, attention: student ministry search committee, 2303 Tree Lane, Kingwood, TX 77339 or email to scamarata@kfbctx.org.

LARGE SUBURBAN ST. LOUIS, Missouri Baptist church prayerfully seeks a full-time minister of music. Duties include leading contemporary worship services, coordinating vocal and instrumental ensembles and major music/drama productions. Evangelistic heart a must. Send resumes to music/worship search committee, Fee Fee Baptist Church, 11330 St. Charles Rock Road, Bridgeton, MO 63044.

BEACHSIDE VACATION CONDOS, www.GulfShoresCondos.com. All sizes, late summer special. Two night weekend, \$130.00, four weeknights, \$190.00. Efficiency unit (2 adults, 2 kids). Good thru 8/28/03. Call (205) 554-1524.

PART-TIME MINISTER OF YOUTH needed at Briarwood Baptist Church, Meridian, MS. Send resume to Briarwood Baptist Church, attn: Personnel Committee, 8733 Hillview Drive, Meridian, MS 39305 or call (601) 681-6615.

FRIENDSHIP BAPTIST CHURCH IS now taking applications and resumes for minister of music/worship. Send all info, including accurate references to Dr. Buster Wilson, Friendship Church, 1389 Main Street, Ecru, MS 38841.

AUBURN BAPTIST CHURCH IN TUPELO, Miss., is now actively seeking a pastor. Interested pastors are asked to send resumes with picture to: Pastor Search Committee, 1138 Road 931, Tupelo, MS 38804 or email Aubumbaptist@bellsouth.net.

PART-TIME MINISTER TO STUDENTS, Noxapater Baptist Church is looking

for a part-time student minister to work with grades 7-12. Work requirements are Wednesdays and weekends. For more info contact: Noxapater Baptist Church, Student Minister Search Committee, P.O. Box 251, Noxapater, MS 39346, phone (662) 724-2156.

WANTED: DAY CARE DIRECTOR, Christian with 3-5 years experience as Day Care Director. Licensed day care director, works well with others; self starter and self motivated. Send resume to Director, P.O. Box 400, Fulton, Miss. 38843.

THE BAPTIST CHILDREN'S VILLAGE is seeking individuals or couples for the position of child care worker. No experience required we will train. Good benefits. Contact Mrs. Peggy Taylor at (601) 922-2242 or paylor@baptistchildrensvillage.com.

First Person: Praying for 'thorn in my flesh'

By Erica Harms
BSU student missionary

Third in a series

The second day of our backpacking journey began like any other. My team, along with four teenagers, continued the uphill trek we had begun the day before, not realizing we had embarked on the most demanding challenge we had ever encountered.

Along the way, we Southerners thrilled to see several patches of snow until we learned we still had hours of rising ahead of us. By the time we reached the top, we had hiked an incline of nearly 5,000 feet, reaching 10,000 feet above sea level. With each upward step we took, our muscles screamed for rest. We tried to balance the need to drink water constantly with the understanding that we were not near a water source to refill our bottles.

The blisters were forming and daylight was quickly fading. We literally had to force one foot off the ground, hoping that once it landed it would be willing to come back up again until we could find flat ground to set up camp.

When it came time to stop for the evening, we found ourselves on a mountain's cliff. It was 10 p.m. — 11 hours after we had begun hiking — before we had made our way to the foot of the mountain and reached a place, undesirable in most circumstances, that would work for the night.

Tuesday night on the mountain, I hit my lowest point physically and found myself

crying out for God's strength. Like Paul, I have pleaded with the Lord three times to take away "a thorn in my flesh." Last September I was in the hospital because I could not stand with

all logic said it was unwise of me to do something so physically challenging but I am convinced that God's ways cannot be understood by human reasoning, so I obeyed.

walk to my tent, because I was too weak to do even a simple task like standing.

Every fear and frustration that I had in September came rushing back to me like a bad dream. As my team laid hands on me and began to pray, I heard God whisper, "My grace is sufficient for you. For my power is made perfect in weakness."

We relied on His power that night because the only way to get help would have been to have someone hike out for several more hours in the middle of the night to the ranger station.

By God's faithfulness, I was able to fall asleep and wake up with enough energy to finish the last stretch of the hike.

The completion of our trip not only left me with a tremendous sense of accomplishment but also a sense of God's majesty. When we reached the top of the mountain and I stood surrounded by the most breathtaking view I have ever seen, I thought about how even the mountains tremble with fear at their Creator.

However, it was down in the valley, at my lowest point, that I got the greatest picture of who this Creator really is.



TOUGH TREKKING — Members of Erica Harms' backpacking group struggle with thin air and fatigue as they hike through the Idaho mountains. Harms is serving as a Baptist Student Union summer missionary in Idaho. (BR photo)

out fainting due to exceptionally low blood pressure. When I felt God leading me to Idaho to work with a backpacking ministry as a summer missionary,

That night the altitude, lack of food, and downright fatigue got the best of me and I fainted. My supervisor Paul held me up as I attempted to

Harms is a Mississippi Baptist Student Union (BSU) summer missionary to Idaho. She is a student at Baptist-affiliated Mississippi College in Clinton. BSU summer missionaries raise their own funds for summer missions, and are supported administratively by gifts to the Mississippi Cooperative Program.

WMU sets church leadership training conferences

By Wilda Fancher
Correspondent

Each year the Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) auxiliary of the Southern Baptist Convention selects an emphasis for participating in the convention's missions program. Mississippi WMU then schedules training sessions for local church WMU leadership to introduce the theme and to present a program of work and materials available to carry out that program.

The 2003-2004 WMU emphasis, Know Him — God's Plan ... Make Him Known — My Part, will be the basis for training in August. Mississippi WMU's theme for the year, Mission Possible, is the theme for training sessions for Mississippi church WMU leaders.

Three sites have been selected for these training sessions. North Mississippi leaders will be trained at First Church, Senatobia, on August 19 from 6:30 p.m. until 9:15 p.m. No

pre-registration is required for this conference; registration begins at 6 p.m.

Central Mississippi leaders will train at an overnighter at Camp Garaywa in Clinton on August 22-23. Registration is required for this training session. Cost ranges from \$26.50 to \$48.50, depending on the housing chosen. Information is on the registration form, which may be downloaded at <http://www.mbc.org/client/images/19540/WMU/camp-greg.pdf> or by calling the Mississippi WMU Department at (601) 292-3317 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 317. Registration forms should be sent directly to Camp Garaywa, 312 Camp Garaywa Road, Clinton, MS 39056.

South Mississippi leaders will be trained at First Church, Wiggins August 26 from 6:30 p.m. until 9:15 p.m. No pre-registration is required for this conference; registration begins at 6 p.m. Conferences offered at

Senatobia (S) and Wiggins (W), along with instructors, include:

- Getting Ready for the New Church Year
- WMU Directors: Pat Ingram (S), Ann Stone (W)
- Women's Groups: Joyce Jones (S), Melleen Moore (W)
- Adults on Mission: Evelyn Williams (S, W)
- Using Literacy and CBS in Language Ministry: Paula Smith (S, W)
- Acteens: Robin Keels (S), Robin Keels and Jennifer Martin (W)
- Youth on Mission: Allen Newman (S), Tammy Anderson (W)
- Girls in Action: Tami Harrell (S), Ann Rials (W)
- Children in Action: Cynthia Mabry (S, W)
- Mission Friends: Teresa Dickens (S), Mandy Davis (W)

In addition to the above core conferences, the following special interest conferences will be during the Camp Garaywa session:

- Chronological Bible

Storying: Paula Smith

- Spanish — Yo Puedo Empezar Un Grupo Misionero?: Paula Smith
- Forgiveness: the Beginning to Racial Reconciliation: Debora Joiner
- Sisters Not Rivals: Kathy Burns
- Servant Leadership: Janet Green
- New Acteens Curriculum: Robin Keels
- New WorldVentures: Ann Rials
- Opportunities for Mission Involvement: Tammy Anderson
- Restorative Justice: Our State's Plan: Juanita Firmin

At the Garaywa conference, Linda Tate, state coordinator for Mission Service Corps, will represent the North American Mission Board. An International Mission Board missionary will also be present to share experiences. Other activities include an Idea Swap Shop and a special worship celebration featuring the women's trio, Sold Out.

FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

Confronting Crises

Genesis 37:1-36

By Karen Hollowell

When considering patience, long-suffering, and perseverance, we often think of Job (who certainly qualifies). Joseph, son of Jacob, would indeed be able to stand right beside Job as one whose faith was tested by fire.

Joseph was the eldest son of Jacob's (Israel's) second wife Rachel. Rachel was the wife of Jacob's choice, his "real" love, and Joseph was his favorite son out of eleven. The other children, no doubt, grew up seeing this relationship between their father and Joseph. In the 37th chapter of Genesis we resume this account when Joseph is age 17. He obviously had leadership abilities, was dependable, responsible, and moral. The anger, resentment, jealousy, and outright hatred that his

brothers had toward Joseph could only have been made worse by the favored treatment he received. Jacob

Hollowell

seemingly made no attempts to hide his feeling either. When he gave Joseph the coat of many colors, this only made matters worse. It was his dreams, however, that proved to be the catalyst for events that would change the course of Joseph's life forever.

Twice he dreamed that his brothers and father would be subservient to him. He could not have known exactly what these dreams meant, but to his brothers, they were signs of the extreme arrogance of their brother who would find them in the fields working and, in effect, tell them that they would be bowing to him all their lives.

There is some debate about

Joseph's attitude here. The Bible does not tell us if Joseph showed arrogance to his brothers, if he was boasting about his dreams, or if he was just matter-of-fact. Certainly Joseph must have realized that the last thing his brothers would want to hear is how he

would be preeminent over them in the future.

All the brothers but Ruben wanted to murder Joseph. He suggested throwing him into a deep well. He had intentions later of rescuing him. In his absence, the others sold Joseph to Midianite traders on their way to Egypt. They took the tunic they had stripped from Joseph, dipped it into goat's blood, then proceeded to go home and tell their father he had been killed by a wild animal. Jacob's immense grief is seen in his statement, "In mourning will I go down to the grave to my son" (v. 35).

The situation looks hopeless for Joseph. We cannot imagine

how he must have felt, alone and young, going to a foreign country to be sold into slavery, never to see his beloved father again. However, in these bleak circumstances, God was working. God was using everything in Joseph's life to bring about His plan of saving His people. This was probably as hard for Joseph to see as it is for us today. Can we see the hand of God when we are in the midst of trials? Can a mother see the infallible plan of God when she's lost a child or a spouse? Can we see the intentions of God when we feel friendless, persecuted, and alone? This is when faith becomes a central issue. During these situations we don't get much comfort from hearing that this must be the will of God for us or that He's trying to bring us to a more intimate knowledge of Him. When Joseph was pleading with his brothers for his life (Gen. 42:21), he probably was not thinking about his dreams or the future plans God had for him. When Jacob was mourning and could not be comfort-

ed, he probably thought he would never know joy and peace again. When confronting crises in our lives we may have to just rest in the promise that "...the Lord's unfailing love surrounds the man who trusts in him" (Ps. 32:10), until His great plan is revealed in our lives as it eventually was in Joseph's. This is very hard to do, but this is the point at which we grow and mature into a person that God can use. We may not save an entire nation from famine, or become the second-in-command of a world empire, but we might help bring a lost person to a saving knowledge of the Lord. We might be a vessel that God uses to build a church, help the homeless and hungry, or show His love to one who has never known it. If these things could be the fruit of our trust, then we too can consider our trials pure joy so that we may be mature and complete (James 1:2-4).

Hollowell is member of Crosby Church, Crosby.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Acting With Love

James 1:19-2:13

By Kiely Young

In his best selling book *The Purpose Driven Life*, Rick Warren poses the question, "What on earth are we here for?" God does have a purpose and plan for every life. The problem with most is trying to force our own plan upon God's plan for our lives. We discover God's plan as we read, receive, and abide in God's Word.

Live by Good Principles (1:19-21)

James says, "Listen Up! God has a few words for you." "Watch what you say, listen carefully, and keep your cool." We could call it right attitude. Exemplify a servant spirit, not a self-serving spirit. We do not gain anything by losing our temper. It only displays lack of control. James would say we need a good house cleaning. Get rid of the junk

and put the right stuff in. "Lay aside filthiness... and receive the implanted Word."

We must confess our sins, then with meekness receive God's Word for daily direction. Paul would say, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me." (Gal. 2:20) Our heart attitude determines our walk of faith and how we receive God's Word.

Learn from God's Word (1:22-25)

One of my favorite preachers had a pattern of interjecting his favorite words into his sermons, "Are you listening?" James would have us hear with the same thought in mind. Are you listening with the intent on

doing something about what you hear? James compares our casual listening to a casual look into a dim mirror. Sometimes we don't like what we see, so we don't look long enough to really do something about what we see, but we are admonished to

take a long look into the Word on a daily basis and "continue in it," not being a forgetful hearer. We must hear, read, study, memorize, and meditate on the Word of God daily. We need to write down those things God impresses on us the most intently. Then we need to act on those things God reveals. This person does not "quickly forget" but becomes a faithful doer of the Word. James says, "This one will be blessed in what he does."

Look Toward Others (1:26-27)

James now poses a piercing analogy. Are we "religious" or are we really practicing "religion?" James contends the man who is practicing his religion will give evidence by careful speech and a servant spirit. We can prac-

tice a lot of ritual, serve on "committees," have perfect attendance for years, even be a committed tither, but unless one has a relationship that proves itself with a life of purity and heart of compassion, he is deceiving himself. It is time to get real. John says, "By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples" (John 15:8). We bear fruit in our service to others, not in self-seeking glory. What are we doing completely for the benefit of the helpless with no possible return for ourselves? That is the beginning of religion because of a relationship.

Love All People (2:1-4,8)

"My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favoritism" (2:1 NIV). James reminds us the ground is level at the foot of the Cross. There should be no partiality or prejudice with regard to race, culture, economics, or even personality — but are we guilty in practice! Far too often, we find evidence of accepting only those folks who talk, dress, act, think, and look like we think they

should so practice. James says, "Are you not being partial?" He reminds us, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." If we do otherwise, we are guilty of sin, we have broken the whole law. Whether we discover folk to be "down and out" or "up and out," Jesus says to love them all the same. We are to treat them with respect, dignity, and love. We are to share the wonderful life-changing Good News of Jesus Christ with every person every time we have the opportunity. Then we can watch God do a work through us that can only be explained in terms of the supernatural. May we be as Peter and John, being unlearned and untrained fishermen, but the Pharisees marveled and the work that God did through them... "They marveled, and they realized that they had been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13).

Young is the director of the Sunday School Dept. at the MBCB in Jackson.

Mississippi Baptist Youth Night

July 25, 2003

Jackson, Mississippi

2003 Mississippi Baptist Youth Night Planning Committee

- Don Lum (chairman), Sunday School Department, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.
- Mike Brister, youth minister at First Church, Brookhaven.
- John Cooper, youth minister at First Church, Amory.
- Randy Cuchens, music minister at First Church, Newton.
- Rob Futral, pastor of Country Woods Church, Jackson.
- Gary Watts, member of Wynndale Church, Terry.

Photos by William H. Perkins, Jr.